

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A scalable and adaptive technique determines which particular software features should be installed in a device (such as a data collection device) without having to rebuild the operating system of the device. The device stores a product configuration matrix (PCM) that provides identification information, including which software features should be installed in the device. A configuration control file (CCF) is externally stored at any suitable location, such as in a local file system or on a network (wired or wireless). The CCF contains product configuration masks, identifications of external locations where software features can be obtained, and identifications of locations within the device where the software feature is to be loaded. During an installation process, the PCM is read from the device and compared with the product configuration mask in the CCF. When there is a match between the product configuration mask and the PCM, the software features corresponding to the matching product configuration mask are obtained (such as via network access) and loaded into the device. This loading of the software features is automatically performed during a boot sequence without user intervention.

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